

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024**

**Assunpink Central Region Office
1 Eldridge Road, Robbinsville, NJ**

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Howard Reinert, Russ Furnari, Howard Geduldig, Marion McClary (online), Ty Gould-Jacinto (online), Erica Miller (online), David Mizrahi (online), Catherine Tredick (online)

Absent: Emile DeVito, Martha Maxwell-Doyle.

Staff in attendance: Dave Golden (Assistant Commissioner), Jason Hearon (Assistant Director), Kathy Clark (NJFW, ENSP chief), Kim Korth (NJFW-ENSP), Christina (Kashi) Davis (NJFW-ENSP), Emily Heiser (NJFW-ENSP), Gretchen Fowles (NJFW-ENSP), MacKenzie Hall (NJFW-ENSP), Bill Pitts (NJFW-ENSP), Kim Springer (NJFW), Mary Monteschio (NJFW), Juliette Harle (NJFW).

Public: unidentified caller online; Miranda Kay (Duke Farms)

Chair convened the meeting at 10:07

The public notice for this meeting was read by K. Clark. The meeting agenda was provided to the New Jersey Secretary of State's office and two NJ newspapers.

Introductions of those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

R. Furnari made a motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting, seconded by H. Geduldig. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously (abstaining: R. Lathrop).

Report by Assistant Commissioner Dave Golden

AC Dave Golden reported on the updated NJFW organization, which resulted in the promotion of Jason Hearon as the new Assistant Director in charge of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program and the Bureau of Land Management. The overarching objective of joining these two programs is to promote land management for all wildlife on NJ's 365,000 acres of wildlife management areas. Jason comes to the Assistant Director position after working several years leading the Land Management bureau.

R. Lathrop asked about the many funding opportunities for habitat management to benefit endangered species. AC Golden discussed some opportunities for grant funding. The Wildlife Action Plan already supports and provides some guidance for this work. R. Furnari requested

that AC Golden keep ENSAC in the loop because some members are on boards of organizations that fund wildlife habitat work.

Legislative Updates

M. Monteschio noted it is the end of the legislative session and there is some action on pending bills of interest to NJ Fish and Wildlife.

Governor Murphy just signed S1311/A594 that established the NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation within the NJDEP. The foundation will be a nonprofit corporation and will be responsible for raising funds for the maintenance and development of NJ's state parks and forests, including wildlife management areas, as well as county and municipal parks and open spaces.

There was brief discussion about the Governor's veto of the invasive species task force bill (A3677/S2186).

Public Input

None. In the future, the website will include information to specify that public comment can only be given in person due to technological limitations at the CRO.

Old Business

Draft Regulations regarding wildlife rehabilitation – K. Clark

Explained that there is a working draft of these revised regulations that are part of the larger rule that covers nongame and exotic permits as well as wildlife rehabilitation regulations.

State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Update – Kim Korth, ENSP

K. Korth reviewed current progress on the SWAP revision. The SWAP team is working to identify statewide priority threats to wildlife and habitats. The staff and the SWAP Technical Advisory Group (TAG) identified 11 statewide threats in the first round of surveys. In the second round of the survey, stakeholders identified another four threats that should be considered statewide threats. So, there are 15 threats considered priority level 2 statewide threats.

The next step is to identify level 2 threats specific to 9 regions of NJ. The regional surveys will go on to identify priority threats that are not already considered statewide threats.

Ongoing Business

R. Lathrop thanked the Nominations Committee and noted that with term limits defined in the ENSAC bylaws, there is an upcoming opening in a non-profit seat occupied by E. DeVito. The Nominations Committee will email members for potential candidates. The same date, April 1, will also require renewal of H. Geduldig's appointment.

New Business

ENSP staff presented on the major ENSP projects. Today staff covered the major bird and mammal projects, and will cover the herptile and invertebrate projects at the March meeting.

Peregrine Falcon Project – Kathy Clark
Beach-nesting Bird Project – Emily Heiser
Secretive Marsh Birds – Kashi Davis
Colonial Waterbirds – Kashi Davis

Short break for lunch

Migratory Shorebird Project – Bill Pitts
Bobcat Project – Gretchen Fowles
Allegheny Woodrat – Gretchen Fowles
Cave-hibernating Bats – Mackenzie Hall
Migratory Bats – MacKenzie Hall

Note: The Bald Eagle Project was presented to ENSAC in 2023, and the 2023 annual report is available at this meeting, by email, and on the NJFW website.
The Forest Songbird presentation by S. Petzinger will be made at the March meeting.

Other Business

The Committee members thanked the staff on the scope and breadth of today's presentations on the ENSP's research and management work.

Meetings in 2024

The next regular ENSAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20. ENSAC meetings in 2024 will be in-person unless otherwise arranged. Dates will be on the website and are:

January 17
March 20
May 15
July 17
September 18
November 20

R. Furnari motioned to adjourn, seconded by H. Reinert, meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Summary of Action Items

- 1) (Continuing item) Identify a longer-term strategy for ENSAC involvement in ASMFC's actions.